

for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SEASTRAND. Mr. Speaker, it has been 1 year since hundreds of Republican House Members and candidates gathered on the steps of the Capitol and signed a Contract With America. Since then, the Republican Party has gone on to revolutionize American politics and to change business as usual inside the beltway.

In the contract, we made specific promises to vote on specific pieces of legislation. We kept our word. We showed the American people that politicians can come to Washington and actually keep promises—something they have not seen for many years.

Mr. Speaker, Republicans are still dedicated to the promises we made in the contract. We will reduce the size and scope of the Federal Government. We will cut taxes for working families. We will reform welfare. We will balance the budget.

In short, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to fight for the change that the American people demanded last November, and we will not rest until we have accomplished our goal.

DO NOT EXCLUDE AMERICAN PEOPLE FROM THE MEDICARE DEBATE

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, we have had 28 days of hearings on Whitewater, 14 days of hearings on Waco-Ruby Ridge. We had 2 days of hearings on the Chinese prison system.

Mr. Speaker, 1 day of hearing has been held on Medicare. We were supposed to commence the markup of this legislation right after we returned from the August recess. The legislation was supposed to be ready for the floor. Yet time after time, this proposal has been postponed.

We have not had but 1 day of hearing. We have not considered the legislation. The clock is running. The calendar is turning.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge my colleagues to be fair. What do my Republican colleagues have to hide? Why is it that they are afraid to bring the American people into consideration of their proposal to cut Medicare \$270 billion, to make a savings that is only necessary to be \$89 billion, according to the trustees of the Social Security System?

Let us be fair. Let us be open. Let us have hearings. Let us not continue this process of delay, while we at the same time exclude the American people from the process.

REPUBLICANS ARE STRENGTHENING, PROTECTING, AND PRESERVING MEDICARE

(Mr. DREIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from California [Mr. MCKEON], my colleague from Santa Clarita, was telling me that over the weekend he talked to a constituent who said to him,

It was interesting. Last Friday I turned on CNN and I saw the Democrats out on the lawn in the rain holding these hearings, claiming that Republicans were not holding hearings on Medicare. And then I flipped to C-SPAN, and there was the hearings in the Committee on Ways and Means on the issue of health care reform and Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, I am struck to hear the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. DINGELL] talk about the litany of hearings on other issues. The Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Commerce held 26 hearings. Last Friday's was the 27th hearing on the issue of Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, I tore out a letter in yesterday's L.A. Times in which this fellow, Frank Anderson from Irvine, said that,

On January 3, 1992, at age 65, my Medicare part B premiums were \$31.80 per month. To and including January 3, 1995, I have had 3 increases, about \$5 each, to raise my premium to \$46.10 per month. If nothing is done, and continuing at this rate for the next 7 years, I would expect 7 more \$5 increases to raise the premium to about \$81.10 per month.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to point to the fact that our total would be about \$90; President Clinton's, \$83. We are strengthening, protecting, and preserving Medicare.

THE RICH GET RICHER AND YOU KNOW THE REST

(Miss COLLINS of Michigan asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Miss COLLINS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise to question the direction of our economy. A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute indicates that although our economic growth has been healthy, living standards for the average American family have continued to fall. The study suggests that there are two types of inequality that have led to the disconnect between economic growth and living standards. First, in the 1990's, overall wage growth has been dampened by a redistribution of income from labor to owners of capital in the form of profits. The report indicates that the economic return to capital, has actually reached historically high levels in this country. Second, however, the growth of wage inequality that began in the 1980's and persisted throughout the 1990's has prevented middle- and low-wage earners from achieving higher wages and has forced them to accept reductions in their real wages. In addition, of course, earnings have failed to keep up with inflation.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you and the leadership of this House that if these trends continue, your make-be-

lieve revolution may prompt a real revolution and it will not be economic. Have a nice day.

IN SUPPORT OF THE TEAM ACT

(Mr. TALENT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, there has been an outstanding practice going on in American workplaces and it is picking up speed. It has been going on for the last 10 or 15 years. It is called employee involvement or TEAMS.

People know this kind of practice as quality circles or safety committees. They can be relatively formal or informal. Here's an example: Employees have a problem with scheduling, and the employer, instead of deciding these things unilaterally says to his supervisors, "Get together with some of the employees and figure out what you are going to do."

This TEAM concept has increased employee satisfaction and American productivity and competitiveness around the world. But unfortunately it is probably illegal under the National Labor Relations Act, because the NLRB thinks of TEAMS as company unions, according to a 60-year-old statute.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have a chance to do something about that today with the TEAM Act. That is an act that will legalize the kind of employee involvement that is already going on in tens of thousands of workplaces around the country today. It is something that employees want. It will empower them and improve employee satisfaction and American competitiveness.

The bill specifically says company unions are still illegal. It does not apply in organized workplaces. The House ought to pass it today.

NO BUDGET, NO PAY

(Mr. DURBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. Speaker, Speaker NEWT GINGRICH announced last week that if political gridlock in Washington results in closing down Federal services to our Nation, so be it.

The Speaker also went on to say that he, as the Speaker, is prepared to force America into a default on its debt for the first time in our history if he does not get his way.

Mr. Speaker, too many politicians on Capitol Hill are talking about a political train wreck as if we are playing with toy trains. A shutdown of Federal services is a serious matter. Members of Congress should take it seriously.

That is why I have introduced legislation that would cut off the paychecks of Members of Congress and the President if the Federal Government shuts down because of budgetary gridlock.

No budget, no pay. If we do not finish the job, we do not get paid. It is just that simple.

We were sent to Washington to solve problems, to work together, to do things in a constructive way. Gridlock and train wrecks are politics as usual. If the political leaders in this town fail, the salaries of Congress and the President should be the first on the budget chopping block.

CONGRESS SHOULD LET EMPLOYEES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

(Mr. MCKEON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCKEON. Mr. Speaker, today the voices of the majority of American workers go unheard—not because American employers are oppressive, but because American law prohibits it. Under current labor law, employers and employees cannot work together to resolve important workplace issues that might involve terms and conditions of employment unless those employees are represented by a union.

While it is legal for an employer to have a meeting or hold a conference with employees to discuss ideas in the abstract, it is illegal for an employer to follow through on any actual workplace changes developed in consultation with the employees, unless those workers are represented by a union. The 88 percent of the private sector work force that is not unionized is, therefore, not allowed to discuss issues which affect the conditions of their employment.

The TEAM Act permits employee involvement in workplace decisionmaking. Companies want their employees to develop new methods and ideas for improving the workplace. It's about time we let employees speak for themselves.

Vote in favor of H.R. 743, the TEAM Act.

DEMOCRATS ON MEDICARE: POLITICS AS USUAL

(Mr. HOKE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOKE. Mr. Speaker, it is true that politics does make strange bedfellows, and we find ourselves once more lying down with the Washington Post, not normally friend to Republicans. But the fact is that they set up an editorial 2 days ago with respect to the "Medigoguing," as they call it, of the Democrat leadership and Democratic Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, talking about the letter of minority leader DICK GEPHARDT, they say:

The letter itself seems to tell us more of the same. It tells you just about everything the Democrats think about Medicare, except how to cut the cost. Medicare and Medicaid together are now a sixth of the budget and a

fourth of all spending for other than interest and defense.

If nothing is done, those shares are going to rise, particularly as the baby boomers begin to retire early in the next century. Republicans have nonetheless stepped up to the issue. They have taken a huge political risk just in calling for the cuts that they have.

What the Democrats have done, in turn, is confirm the risk. The Republicans are going to take away your Medicare, they say. That is their only message. They have no plan. The Democrats have fabricated the Medicare tax cut connection because it is useful politically. We think it is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, we agree.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND THEIR SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT TODAY DURING 5-MINUTE RULE

Mrs. WALDHOLTZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit today while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole under the 5-minute rule.

Committee on Agriculture; Committee on Banking and Financial Services; Committee on Commerce; Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities; Committee on International Relations; Committee on the Judiciary; Committee on Resources; Committee on Science; and Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

THE EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR INFORMATION RETRIEVAL SYSTEMS IMPLEMENTATION

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent the immediate consideration of the bill (H.R. 2288) to amend part D of title IV of the Social Security Act to extend for 2 years the deadline by which States are required to have in effect an automated data processing and information retrieval system for use in the administration of State plans for child and spousal support.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I yield to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SHAW] for the purposes of briefly explaining the bill.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding under his reservation.

H.R. 2288 simply gives States an additional 2 years to implement data processing requirements that Congress imposed on their child support programs in 1988. H.R. 2288 was approved on September 12, by unanimous voice vote of the Ways and Means Committee. According to CBO, the bill has no budget

impact. As far as we have been able to determine, there are no Republicans or Democrats who oppose the bill.

Several factors have prevented States from meeting the October 1, 1995, deadline for meeting Federal data processing requirements. To date—less than a week before the deadline—only one State has actually finished its system.

So beginning October 1, if we don't take action, 49 States will be subject to financial penalties and mandatory correction procedures.

Clearly, if only one State can meet a deadline, something is wrong. That is why I rise to ask unanimous consent to extend this deadline for 2 years.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, further reserving the right to object, I rise in support of H.R. 2288, a bill to extend the deadline for State child support computer systems.

One of the most important reforms of the Family Support Act of 1988 was the mandated implementation of a statewide child support enforcement computer system by October 1, 1995. Without such a computer network, States cannot hope to effectively track and enforce child support obligations. In fact, back in the mid-1980's we frequently heard anecdotes about States keeping child support records in shoe boxes. It was no wonder that they had such a poor record of collecting child support.

In response, Congress mandated a statewide computer system, authorized extra Federal funding to develop these systems, and set what we thought was a reasonable timetable—October 1, 1995—for implementation of the system. Now, as the deadline approaches we are told that only one State—Montana—has met this requirement and that we cannot expect many more to comply in the next 6 months.

Are the States to blame for this failure? Only partially. The real culprit is the Bush administration—which waited 4 years after the legislation was signed into law to issue the specifications for this system. Until then, States simply did not know what standards the Federal Government would use to judge whether they met the requirements. In dragging its feet, the Bush administration was both irresponsible and wasteful of our scarce resources.

So, here we are. It's a few days before the deadline and the Republican majority has finally brought to the floor a bill to extend it. I have no doubts about the Senate acting quickly enough on this measure for it to be signed into law by October 1. We have a chance to do the right thing. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2288.

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Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. EVERETT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the bill, as follows: